

this side of the water. If Dr. Bucknill were a Japanese of the olden time he could scarcely refrain from committing *hari-kari* physically, as he has already perpetrated it psychically. Probably no more humiliating spectacle has been recently witnessed than that of a gentleman of Dr. Bucknill's scientific position unsaying, in a recent number of *Brain*, his wise words of not very long ago. We await with interest his further lucubrations on the subject of reasoning mania in general and Guiteau's sanity in particular.

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DR. L. C. GRAY ON HYPNOTISM AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

MEDICINE has not, so far as we are aware, heretofore been deemed a pursuit specially adapted for the display of humor; but in this era of progress, one must be prepared for any thing; and, accordingly, our readers will perhaps not be surprised to hear of the singular proficiency in that respect of Dr. L. C. Gray of Brooklyn. This gentleman has recently been entertaining the Medical Society of the County of Kings with a disquisition on hypnotism, illustrated by experiments on animals. Now, if there be any thing comical in the phenomena of hypnotism, it might be supposed that, in the large amount of attention which has latterly been given thereto, the comicality would have become somewhat threadbare. Dr. Gray, however, is not a man to be easily discouraged. Casting about in his mind for some means of tickling his auditors' midriiffs, he hit upon the capital device of representing himself as being the only true and original hypnotic experimenter on animals—none others being genuine except "Mr. Egner, the bird-fancier." We can imagine the Homeric mirth which this announcement must have created. Here were Dr. Gray and Mr. Egner, the bird-fancier, on the one side; and, on the other, Dr. Czermak of Berlin, Dr. Hammond of New York (the first to produce hypnotic phenomena in animals), an indefinite number of so-called mesmerisers who had frequently performed the same feat, and a large body of hypnotic literature,—each and all whereof were in the ludicrous position of being ignored by this delightful humorist; indeed, if we may judge from the report of his lecture, he had never heard even of any

general writers on this subject, save for some cursory mention that had reached his ears of the works of Drs. Preyer and Charcot. After such a captivating opening, it is not to be wondered at that the lecture, *qua* lecture, was chiefly remarkable for what was not in it. But Dr. Gray had had his joke, and nobody could expect any thing more.

We have, however, one criticism to make on Dr. Gray's buffoonery :—that, original though it be in its initial *motif*, it lacks variety in its development. No jest, however excellent intrinsically, can fail to lose by persistent repetition. Mere alteration in the application will not suffice ; all truly great humorists have been men of great fertility of resource. Dr. Gray, it is to be feared, lacks ambition ; by dint of cutting a singular and unprecedented caper, he succeeded in raising a laugh ; and thenceforth, instead of employing his ingenuity to devise other amusing antics, he has contented himself with repeating his first gambol *ad infinitum*, until his most cordial appreciators begin to get a little weary.

Take, for example, the paper recently published by the doctor on genito-urinary irritation. Here we find him setting forth, as his own independent and unborrowed property, sundry important conclusions which had previously been elucidated with much care by Dr. Newton M. Shaffer. The latter gentleman was, it is true, beguiled into taking the joke seriously, and, in the pages of the *New York Medical Record*, gravely charged Dr. Gray with failing to give him credit for original researches and conclusions in the same direction. Dr. Gray, of course, desired nothing better than the opportunity thus afforded him ; and in his reply to the charge of plagiarism, archly omitted any allusion to three out of the six conclusions which he had originally put forth. Now, the three omitted conclusions were the most important attained, and, as was pointed out at the time, were so evidently covered by the articles he had ignored, that he would have convicted himself had he reproduced them in his defence. But who would, with a person whose mission in the world is to create laughter, have him conform himself to the behavior and principles of gentlemen ? When, at the pantomime, we see the clown picking the pockets of the other

*dramatis personæ*, do we call out for a policeman? Buffoonery, like beauty, is its own excuse for being : and if the clown were not a clown, he would be nothing.

Still, the clown ought to perfect himself in other arts besides pocket-picking. Let us take another instance of Dr. Gray's performances. In an extended paper touching upon cerebral thermometry, he had the amusing audacity to pass by without mention the original experiments thereon of Dr. Hammond. Here we find the same dashing execution, but also the same lack of novelty. Or, take one more case. In the *New York Medical Record* of Oct. 4, 1879, appeared a full account of the successful reduction of a traumatic dislocation of the fifth cervical vertebra, by suspension of the head and rotation of the body. The patient was paralyzed in the arms and legs, and was unable to swallow food. The case was reported by Dr. William J. Morton. At a meeting of the Neurological Society during the winter of 1881, Dr. Gray read a paper describing in great detail an almost identical case, and laying great stress upon its rarity, and so forth. At this meeting Dr. Morton related his own similar case, amid expressions of surprise on the part of the waggish Dr. Gray that he had not yet read it. This was good, but there was more to come. In the *Annals of Anatomy and Surgery* of February, 1882, appears Dr. Gray's identical paper, under the title : "Successful reduction, after four months' malposition, of a dislocated third cervical vertebra, causing various serious nervous symptoms," with no allusion to the fact that it had first been read before the Neurological Society, and, of course, with no allusion either to Dr. Morton's similar case and report thereon.

There is a degree of sameness in all this, which is scarcely relieved by Dr. Gray's remark that he had had "neither time nor inclination to search the literature of the subject thoroughly," the humor of which lies in the fact that the case in question was brought to his notice without calling upon either his inclination or his time ; nor even by the further observation, "that this case is *unique* in its reduction after so prolonged a dislocation, and the supervention of such grave symptoms" ; from which is drawn the

final, apparently unaided and original conclusions, that "the success attending it [reduction of the dislocation] would certainly seem to indicate that, on the one hand, the dangers of vertebral reduction are greatly exaggerated, and that, on the other, the benefit occurring from such reduction in seemingly grave cases has not been fully appreciated." No ; the painful conclusion is forced upon us that Dr. Gray, in spite of all his gifts, either lacks originality, or will not sufficiently exert himself to command it. And by "originality" in this connection we mean, of course, not originality in research, but originality in his manner of appropriating the researches of others.

We trust that no one will infer, from the above remarks, that we have any intention of treating Dr. Gray seriously ; that we desire to make him recognize priority for an original line of argument, for original conclusions, or for unique cases ; that we would attempt to impress upon him that, in medicine, original workers and observers depend upon professional courtesy for a recognition of their labors. By no means ; we have far too keen an appreciation of the rôle he is enacting for that. But if we could prevail upon him to bear in mind that the greatest and most entertaining charlatans of history have been men of more than one idea, and that whoever aspires to rival their fame must have more than one idea likewise, we shall not have written in vain. Should he fail to arouse himself, there is some danger lest he go down to posterity as a sort of scientific blotting-pad, whose sole originality consists in the doctor's signature.

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VOL. i, No. 1, of the *American Journal of Stimulants and Narcotics* lies before us. This new journal is to be published monthly, at a subscription price of \$2.00 per year, under the able editorial management of Dr. H. H. Kane, whose recent exhaustive studies upon the "Opium-habit" have made his name agreeably familiar to medical readers.

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